97-84025-6

University of Wisconsin

Report...of Professor Robert McNutt McElroy...

[Madison]

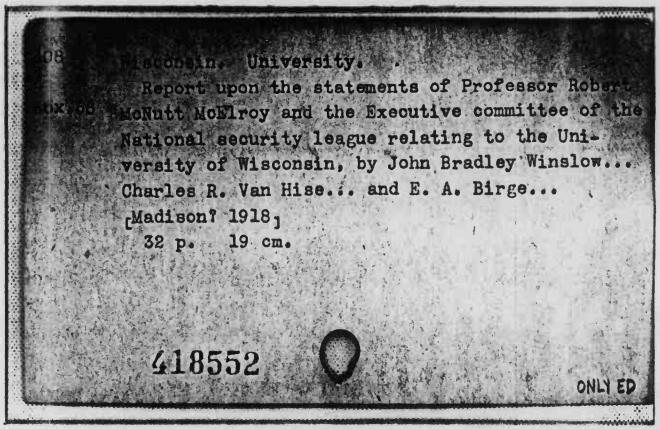
[1918]

97-84025-6
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD


Wisconsin. University.
Report upon the statements of Professor Robert McNutt McElroy and the Executive committee of the National security league relating to the University of Wisconsin, by John Bradley Winslow... Charles R. Van Hise... and E. A. Birge...
[Madison? 1918]
32 p. 19 cm.
418552
ONLY ED

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 10:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 2-13-97 INITIALS: MS

TRACKING # : MSH 21315

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

378.2
W
Rep.756

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

REPORT UPON THE STATEMENTS OF PROFESSOR ROBERT McNUTT McELROY AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY LEAGUE RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

By

JOHN BRADLEY WINSLOW,
CHIEF JUSTICE WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT

CHARLES R. VAN HISE,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

AND

E. A. BIRGE,
DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

THE ACTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN UPON THE REPORT

The Faculty of the University of Wisconsin approves and adopts the statement prepared by Messrs. Winslow, Van Hise, and Birge in reply to the action of the Executive Committee of the National Security League supporting Dr. Robert McNutt McElroy's slanders against the University.

(Attest) M. H. HAERTEL,
Secretary.

June 3, 1918.

INTRODUCTION

In an interview printed by the *New York Tribune* of April 17, 1918, Dr. Robert McNutt McElroy says he decided deliberately to insult the students of the University of Wisconsin in the course of an address which he delivered at Madison on April 6 as a representative of the National Security League. The facts show that he executed this intention in such a way that the audience was equally ignorant of his words and of his intention until from a safe distance he publicly boasted of them and of the courage which he displayed in the performance. His boast, as issued through the press, includes a claim that he called the cadet regiment "a bunch of damned traitors" and charged its members with disloyalty; that the regiment accepted his offensive language in silence; and he contrasted their passive submission to his gross and intentional insults with the response which students of another university would have made to such treatment; whereas the members of the regiment did not submit in silence, because they did not hear the intended insults.

The faculty of the University made prompt protest to the National Security League regarding these claims of its agent. After long delay a reply was received from the President and Executive Committee on May 31. In this they endorse Dr. McElroy's statements "without qualification" as "absolutely exact". They thus assume official responsibility for his statements in the eastern press, against which the University protested. In deal-

ing with specific matters the reply employs language which is ambiguous and so worded as to avoid the issues raised by the University, and to lead the public into believing that they have been met.

The University of Wisconsin waited long and in full confidence for the reply of the Executive Committee of the League. It seemed incredible that the officers of an organization of its standing would pass without rebuke the public bragging of its representative that he had offered gross insults to an audience, even though this boast was not true. It seemed impossible that such a responsible organization would endorse as "absolutely exact" statements whose falseness had been shown by overwhelming proof.

But both of these things have happened. The University of Wisconsin is therefore compelled to issue the following statement of the facts and of its position. Only by such action can the members of the National Security League become aware of the conduct of its officers. Only by such action can the friends of the University of Wisconsin be placed in a position to meet the calumnies of Dr. McElroy.

I—THE FACTS IN THE CASE

1. At the Agricultural Pavilion of the University of Wisconsin on April 6, 1918, Professor Robert McNutt McElroy, representing the National Security League, addressed an audience which included the cadet regiment of the University of Wisconsin. The address was a long one. The students, before the meeting, had marched two and a half miles in the rain; and they were

wet and cold throughout the prolonged address. During the latter part of it many of the students became inattentive and noisy. They desired that Professor McElroy should close his speech and they indicated this in a manner which students not infrequently use. Being present under orders, they could not withdraw, as did the larger part of the remainder of the audience. Neither the students as a whole, nor any group of them, did anything which could properly be interpreted as indicating a lack of loyalty. They gave close attention and warm response to the patriotic addresses of Miss Burke and Senator Lenroot, the first of whom spoke before Dr. McElroy and the second after him.

2. Professor McElroy became irritated by the noise and inattention and uttered ejaculations reflecting in profane terms on the loyalty of his audience, then almost reduced to the university cadet corps. He uttered them in so low a voice that there is wide difference of opinion regarding his exact words, even among those who sat near him on the stage. Many persons sitting within twenty feet of him upon the stage did not hear the words at all; and, so far as can be ascertained, no student heard them. According to the evidence presented, when Professor McElroy took his seat at the close of his address he made a second objectionable remark to Miss Burke. (See Exhibit D.)

3. After his return to New York, Dr. McElroy gave an account of his western trip, which was issued officially by the National Security League on April 15; and in it he states that he had faced "large bodies of young men clad in the uniform of the American army beneath which were concealed the souls of Prussians." (See Exhibit A.) He brought out the full meaning of this statement in an interview printed in the *New York Tribune*

of April 17. This interview, after mentioning the noisiness of the students, represents Dr. McElroy as saying:

> Finally I couldn't stand it any longer. I determined to find out whether it was my fault or whether it was the American point of view that these young men objected to. So I leaned forward and I deliberately insulted them.
>
> "Do you know what I think of you from your conduct tonight?" I said. "I think you're a bunch of damned traitors!"
>
> Well, what do you think happened? A loud outcry of protest? A stampede to pull me down on the platform? A demand that I retract that affront to their university? No, sir; not any of those things. What happened was absolutely nothing—not a murmur, not a sound, except that toward the back of the room a few men snickered.
>
> I was not only thunderstruck; I was appalled. If a speaker said that to a group of men at my university, Princeton, I should hate to have to answer for the consequences. But even then I thought I'd test them a little further—give them another chance, as it were. So a little later I said: "I've often wondered what it would be like to speak before a Prussian audience. I think I know now." Still there was no protest—no slightest sign of resentment.
>
> I hesitate . . . to accuse an entire university of disloyalty, and many people have since tried to reassure me as to Wisconsin. . . . I say that a thing like that should be investigated. (See Exhibit B.)

The fact that Professor McElroy gave this interview has been confirmed by President Menken of the National Security League in the presence of the three persons who sign this report. He says, however, that Professor McElroy did not give out the name of the institution of which he was speaking. Granting this to be true, it seems quite immaterial. The interview in question named the institution as the University of Wisconsin; and as Professor McElroy has never publicly disavowed the interview either in whole or in part, it has become his in its entirety by the simplest principles of ratification.

The complaint of the University of Wisconsin against Dr. McElroy was and is based on these published statements, and not upon his half-audible words, uttered in the heat of irritation. (See Exhibit B.)

4. After Dr. McElroy's interview of April 17 reached Madison, the faculty of the University adopted, April 24, a resolution asking from the National Security League "reparation, full, explicit, and emphatic", for the acts of its agent. (See Exhibit C.)

5. On May 11 President Menken of the National Security League visited Madison and conferred with the three men who prepared this report. He was put into possession of the facts. During his return journey, Mr. Menken issued, on behalf of the League, an official statement, which was published in the *Chicago Tribune* of May 13. The statement contains the following reference to the events at the Agricultural Pavilion: "they [the students] showed their restlessness at an inopportune moment, when McElroy was reading from the President's message. He misinterpreted their action as that of disloyalty. It was most unfortunate, and when he is convinced of that fact I am sure he will be glad to say so." (See Exhibit E.)

6. For some time, however, the University received no direct statement from President Menken although telegrams were sent him regarding the matter. On May 31 the following printed document was received from President Menken, mailed in New York on May 28, eleven days after the date of its adoption:

Resolution

Adopted by the Executive Committee of the National Security League at a meeting held on Friday, May 17, 1918.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security League, held on Friday, May 17, 1918, Mr. Menken reported on his trip to Madison, Wis. He stated that it was his belief after his investigation, that without qualification, every statement made by Professor McElroy was absolutely exact; that Professor McElroy had made no reflection upon the loyalty of either the University or the State of Wisconsin, and that the attack of the University, made without investigation of the facts, was unwarranted.

He further stated that he found that the University was doing a vast amount of constructive patriotic work, which fact did not justify the conduct of certain of its students, whose disorder Professor McElroy interpreted to their faces as due to lack of patriotic interest.

Thereupon the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the report of the President concerning his visit to Wisconsin be accepted; that in view of the full disclaimer and proof that no imputation concerning the loyalty of the University of Wisconsin and of the State of Wisconsin has been made by Dr. McElroy, the Executive Committee of the National Security League is fully satisfied with the explanation of the facts regarding the disorder in the audience during Dr. McElroy's address and they fully endorse Dr. McElroy's statements and acts in his Western tour, and the matter shall be regarded as closed.

II—THE POSITION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

A. As to Dr. McElroy

1. The University has not "attacked" Dr. McElroy on account of the angry words uttered at the Agricultural Pavilion. Few people heard them at all; fewer still understood the words; few if any thought them anything but the *sotta voce* petulance of an orator who had failed to hold his audience.

2. The University of Wisconsin asserts that Dr. McElroy's account of the matter, contained in the *New York Tribune* of April 17 and elsewhere, is not a true statement of what occurred. Its slight basis of fact is in the disorder among the students during his address and in Dr. McElroy's low-spoken offensive remarks. Dr. McElroy did not "deliberately insult" the cadet corps, calling them "damned traitors"; for an audience cannot be insulted by words they do not hear. The corps did not receive the alleged insult in silence, "except that . . . a few men snickered"; for Dr. McElroy's assertion that they were inattentive and noisy is fully true. Dr. McElroy did not "test them further". The scene so dramatically described by Dr. McElroy of a large audience of young men submitting without protest to the charge of being traitors to their country never took place.

3. The University of Wisconsin asserts that Dr. McElroy's published interview constitutes a charge of disloyalty directed against the cadet corps of the University. It asserts that in charging the cadet corps, some twelve hundred students, with disloyalty, he attacked

the loyalty of the University. Substantially all of the male undergraduate students are members of that corps or have been enrolled in it. Moreover, he said: "I hesitate to accuse an entire university of disloyalty . . . But . . ." (See Exhibit B.)

The charge is found, not in the spoken words of Dr. McElroy but in his statements subsequently printed.

B. As to the National Security League

1. The Faculty of the University promptly asked from the League "reparation" for the acts of its agent. Pending such action it continued its relation of unaltered friendliness with the League. This relation continued until May 31, when the reply of the League (adopted May 17) was received at Madison.

When President Menken was in Madison he was informed that the University of Wisconsin had no complaint against the League; that its charges were against Professor McElroy. On May 31, when the reply of the League was received, a telegram was sent to President Menken withdrawing the statement that there was no complaint against the League. (See Exhibit H.)

2. The University, through its representatives, made perfectly clear to President Menken on May 11 that the "reparation" desired was a disavowal of the statement quoted above from the matter officially issued by the League; a withdrawal or disavowal of Dr. McElroy's published interview; that is, such apology for misrepresentation and insult as gentlemen are wont to offer; and that the University could not accept, instead of this, a certificate of loyalty from the National Security League.

C. As to the Resolution of the Executive Committee of the League, Dated May 17

1. President Menken reports his belief "that without qualification every statement made by Professor McElroy was absolutely exact." This must mean, among other things, that President Menken endorses Dr. McElroy's statement that he "deliberately insulted" the cadet corps of the University; that he called them "damned traitors" and "Prussians"; and that they accepted this characterization. These statements, President Menken says, are "absolutely exact." The University asserts that they are "absolutely" false.

He then goes on to state "that Professor McElroy had made no reflection upon the loyalty" of the University. We must accept President Menken's statement as embodying his own judgment and that of his Executive Committee. It is conceivable that they would not regard it as an imputation of disloyalty to the National Security League if a large share of its members were in print called "damned traitors" and said to possess the "souls of Prussians". But if this is so, then the blood of the officers of the National Security League is less easily stirred than that of the members and friends of the University of Wisconsin.

President Menken states that the "attack of the University" on Dr. McElroy was "made without investigation of the facts". This statement is wholly incorrect. The facts were most carefully investigated on the testimony of many men who heard Dr. McElroy's speech. When President Menken was in Madison on May 11 the only evidence he took was that presented to him by the signers of this statement. They were ready to have the full evidence taken from as many people as he desired to meet. This was not done by President Menken,

who expressed himself as fully satisfied with the statement of facts he had received and said that he did not care to take up the matter with others. That he was satisfied that a retraction was due to the University by Dr. McElroy is shown by his official statement in the *Chicago Tribune* of May 13 (See Exhibit E). The subsequent statement of President Menken that the "attack" of the University was made without investigation is wholly at variance with the facts. The University can not accept it as either fair or truthful.

2. The resolution of the Executive Committee of the League speaks of "the full disclaimer and proof that no imputation concerning the loyalty of the University of Wisconsin and of the State of Wisconsin has been made by Dr. McElroy."

This statement appears to be an evasion of the issue. The University of Wisconsin asserts that Dr. McElroy's printed interview charged *it* with disloyalty and asks the League for reparation. The League replies that Dr. McElroy had not imputed disloyalty to the University *and to the State*. Let the reader go through Exhibits A and B and judge for himself.

The same lack of explicitness runs through the rest of the resolution. It states that the League "is fully satisfied with the explanation of the facts regarding the disorder in the audience during Dr. McElroy's address". Does this mean that the League is fully satisfied with Dr. McElroy's explanation of "damned traitors", or with President Menken's explanation published in the Chicago *Tribune* of May 13 of "restlessness at an inopportune moment"? This is precisely the question between the University and the League; and again the Executive Committee of the League does not meet the issue.

Finally, the resolutions "fully endorse Dr. McElroy's statements and acts in his Western tour".

This is the third attempt to bury the issue under generalities. The University has not protested against the acts done or words spoken by Dr. McElroy "in his western tour." It has protested against Dr. McElroy's printed statements concerning the University, made after his return to the East. For these statements it has asked reparation. This request President Menken, after investigation, thought reasonable (see Exhibit E). The Executive Committee of the League, however, meets the request not with a disavowal of words obviously untrue, but by a general support of the agent, expressed in words sure to be misinterpreted by those not fully informed with regard to the facts. Dr. McElroy's printed statements insulted the loyalty of the university; the reply of the Executive Committee of the League is an insult to its intelligence.

JOHN BRADLEY WINSLOW,
CHARLES R. VAN HISE,
E. A. BIRGE.

APPENDIX

As an appendix there are printed all the documents to which reference is made or from which quotations are taken, so far as they are pertinent to the matter discussed. The omission, in printing, of any part of a document is indicated.

EXHIBIT A

Released for Publication on or after April 15

From the NATIONAL SECURITY LEAGUE,
19 West 44th Street, N. Y. C.
E. L. Harvey, Publicity Director.

NATIONAL SECURITY LEAGUE LEADER SAYS WEST NEEDS AROUSING ON WAR

Dr. Robert M. McElroy, League's Educational Director, finds pro-Germanism, apathy and ignorance in Western tour

New York, April ,—Open pro-Germanism, apathy toward the war and ignorance of its real meanings to an alarming extent were discovered by Dr. Robert M. McElroy, Educational Director of the National Security League, in a three weeks' tour through the West from which he returned to this city today.
(Here is omitted material not pertinent to this report.)

It is fair to say, however, that this condition is the exception and not the rule. Even in the states like Wisconsin, where the German blood is perhaps thirty per cent of the total population, and where the German affiliation by marriage adds certainly another twenty per cent, even in such commonwealths, and they are few, many of the foreign-born have already caught the ideas which are able to transform the people of any blood into Americans as real as though their ancestors had fought with Washington to make this Republic or with Lincoln to save it.

But we must face the fact that there are still many communities with pro-Germans at heart enjoying a liberty which makes possible such scandals to our civilization as the opening of parochial schools with the singing of "Deutschland ueber Alles" and the conducting of the work of the schools in the language of the deadly foe to our ideals and our civilization.

In this trip, I have known what it was to face vast audiences shot through and through with unmistakable signs of pro-German sympathies; to face large bodies of young men clad in the uniform of the American army beneath which were concealed the souls of Prussians. These are the danger spots in our Republic, these are the signs unmistakable that the process of assimilation has not been successfully accomplished, and that therefore we are lacking the common background which is essential to the safety not only of America but of those institutions which America holds in trust for all humanity.

(Remainder of article irrelevant to issue.)

EXHIBIT B

(From the *New York Tribune*, April 17, 1918.)

WEST IS CROWDED WITH PRO-GERMANS, DR. McELROY SAYS

Government Should Investigate University of Wisconsin, He Declares

Dr. Robert McElroy, back from the National Security League speaking tour, which took him through nine states, filled in yesterday the background of some of his charges of pro-Germanism and anti-Americanism.

"At the University of Wisconsin," he said, "where there are about 2,000 students, I spoke to a large audience of young men wearing the khaki of the United States. I was telling them of America's real purposes and aims and ideals in this war. It seemed to me that from the outset the audience took strangely little interest in the things I was talking about, the cause for which I was pleading.

"For the most part, once they had learned that American patriotism was my theme, they sat with folded arms, staring wearily up at the ceiling. From time to time they'd turn and look at each other and smile superciliously, sort of pityingly. There was a good deal of fidgeting and shuffling of feet. Several times, generally at the most strongly patriotic portions of my talk, sounds which bore every sign of being subdued hisses could be heard. Later it was offered to me in explanation that these were warnings to the noisy ones to be quiet; but they didn't sound that way to me.

"When I began to quote from some of President Wilson's messages," continued Dr. McElroy, "the rattle of snapping rifle triggers throughout the audience—the men, being under compulsory military training, have guns—sounded very much like an attempt to break up the speech.

"Finally I couldn't stand it any longer. I determined to find out whether it was my fault or whether it was the American point of view that these young men objected to. So I leaned forward and I deliberately insulted them.

" 'Do you know what I think of you from your conduct tonight?' I said. 'I think you're a bunch of damned traitors!'

"Well, what do you think happened? A loud outcry of protest? A stampede to pull me down on the platform? A demand that I retract that affront to their university? No, sir; not any of those things. What happened was absolutely nothing—not a murmur, not a sound, except that toward the back of the room a few men snickered.

"I was not only thunderstruck; I was appaled. If a speaker said that to a group of men at my university, Princeton, I should hate to have to answer for the consequences. But even then I thought I'd test them a little further—give them another chance, as it were. So a little later I said: 'I've often wondered what it would be like to speak before a Prussian audience. I think I know now.' Still there was no protest—no slightest sign of resentment.

"I hesitate," Dr. McElroy continued, "to accuse an entire university of disloyalty, and many people have since tried to reassure me as to Wisconsin. They insist

that it's absolutely all right, and I certainly hope that it is. But to my mind that episode stands out as one of the most disgraceful things I have encountered, especially coming from a state in which 100,000 disloyal votes were recently registered. I say that a thing like that should be investigated."

Many Enemy Sympathizers

Commenting on the prevalence of enemy sympathizers in America, Dr. McElroy stated that 30 per cent of the Wisconsin population today is German and 20 per cent German by marriage.

"We are not even yet fully awake to what this means," he declared. "I was out there when the news of the German advance was coming through, and from the reception it got you would scarcely have gained the impression that it was a blow to America. You would have been far more likely to suppose that it was somehow a cause for congratulation in this country."

Dr. McElroy also named Oregon, North Dakota and Michigan as states with extensive communities that are quite undisguised in their sympathy for the foe, while in Monroe County, Ill., he declared, feeling against American participation in the war ran so high that one delegation of Liberty Loan orators was threatened with shot-guns.

In Washington county, in the south of Illinois, it was, according to Mrs. Myra H. Willson, chairman of the Women's Liberty Loan Committee, impossible to find any one willing to serve as chairman for either the Liberty Loan or war stamp work. Sinclair, Adams, Macoupin and Bond counties, Mrs. Willson added in a letter to the National Security League, are also all strongly German in make-up.

"It is about time," said Dr. McElroy, "that we stopped just talking about these things. We know the character of what's going on—the Secretary of the Interior himself has told of *'Deutschland Ueber Alles'* being sung in the Western schools—and we ought to know by now where such things lead. They constitute a menace to the nation, now and in the future. The time has come when we must take some decided action in the matter."

Exhibit C

Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin Adopted April 24, 1918

The Faculty of the University of Wisconsin resents deeply the accusations made by Professor Robert McNutt McElroy against the University. He charges that its students are disloyal, because, cold and rain-soaked, in an unheated auditorium, some of them showed discourtesy to him as a speaker. The Faculty believes that a public speaker who bases a judgment so sweeping upon the experience of such a meeting, who attributes to disloyalty the restlessness and inattention of an audience held for two hours and a half under such physical conditions that a large proportion of the students present had to be put under medical care, such conditions that two citizens who took part have since died from exposure, sufficiently brands his judgment.

The University of Wisconsin, since the beginning of the war, has expended its utmost resources to bring home to its students, and to the State, the significance of the present great struggle for democracy. Through press and platform it has been and is now conducting a

systematic campaign of education on the issues and measures of the war, a campaign that has helped in the establishment throughout the State of a fighting patriotism as vigorous as any section or element in the country can show. In all this patriotic work it has had the eager support and constructive aid of the very students that Professor McElroy slanders. No greater obstacle could be opposed to the success of this campaign, and of the work of the National Security League, than such hostility and suspicion as are excited by Professor McElroy's hasty and ill-considered judgments.

The Faculty is custodian of the honor of an institution whose sons fought in the armies of England and France before America became a party to the war, have been in the forefront of the American line since it has existed, and many of whom have already made the final sacrifice for their cause. It cannot allow that honor to be impugned by the agent of a responsible organization, such as the National Security League, without demanding redress, full, explicit, and emphatic. The Faculty calls, with confidence, upon the National Security League to exert its best efforts to undo the damage done by the accusations which its agent has spread broadcast over the country.

Exhibit D

Letters to President Van Hise From Men Who Were Present at the Agricultural Stock Pavilion During the Address of Dr. McElroy, on April 6

Letter from John M. Olin, Attorney, Madison, Wisconsin, also Trustee of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company

Madison, Wisconsin, May 2, 1918.

President Charles R. Van Hise,
Madison, Wisconsin.

Dear Mr. Van Hise: I have read with much interest your letter to President Hibben of Princeton University. What you state is fully corroborated by my recollection of what occurred at the meeting of April 6th at the Stock Pavilion. I sat on the stage during the whole meeting and was not more than twenty feet from the speaker, Mr. McElroy. I heard nothing whatever from Mr. McElroy criticising anybody connected with the university. I felt so strongly about this that when my partner Mr. Butler within a few days after the address received a letter from his friend Judge Oscar Hallam, of St. Paul, which enclosed a newspaper clipping containing the charges of McElroy after he had got back East, I positively denied any such statement as McElroy claims to have made, was made on that occasion, and I at once wrote Judge Hallam to that effect. Within a day or two thereafter, I learned from others that something was said by him just about as you put it in your letter, and on that

account I wrote another letter to Judge Hallam correcting my first letter to the extent of stating that undoubtedly McElroy said something but denied absolutely that he said what he claims to have said. I merely mention these facts to show that as stated in your letter, whatever McElroy said was said rather to himself than to any audience, and not in a way to attract any attention either on the part of the student body or anybody else. Indeed had McElroy called the students as he claims to have done a lot of "damned Prussians," so that they could have heard the same, I do not believe McElroy would have continued speaking very long, for I think the student body would have seen to it that he was not permitted to say anything further.

Very truly yours,

JOHN M. OLIN.

LETTER FROM O. D. BRANDENBURG, EDITOR IN CHIEF, MADISON DEMOCRAT

MADISON, WISCONSIN,
May 6, 1918.

Dr. Chas. R. Van Hise,
President of the University of Wisconsin,
Madison, Wisconsin.

DEAR DR. VAN HISE: At South Bend, Indiana, a few days ago while away from home, I noticed your letter to President Hibben of Princeton University with reference to the published assertion of Professor Robert McNutt McElroy that in his address in Madison, April 6th, he had deliberately sought to insult his audience by saying:

"Do you know what I think of your conduct tonight—I think you're a bunch of damned traitors"; and it is

also claimed that he referred to his auditors as "damned Prussians."

Your answer in effect that nothing of the sort occurred, at least that nothing of the sort was audible, is strong and reasonably complete. Your language and your intimations are fully justified; but I wish to add my testimony to the effect that Dr. McElroy made neither of these statements. I sat within twenty feet of him and heard every word he uttered. There were no allusions openly or in suppressed tones to "damned traitors" or "damned Prussians" or a single reference of any nature calculated to be a reflection upon the loyalty of his audience.

Indeed, it is but just to Dr. McElroy to say that his speech was one of fine diction and his poise that of a complete gentleman. When this is said, I think all is said—and all would have been well but for this later astounding assertion by Dr. McElroy that he deliberately aimed to insult this audience. If he actually makes such a claim, I regret to say that he is guilty of falsification. I have been a reporter for more than thirty years, trained carefully to hear what public speakers may say and I cannot possibly be mistaken when I now declare that Dr. McElroy said nothing to insult his audience. He never called the people "damned Prussians." He never called them "damned traitors." Do you imagine, Dr. Van Hise, that reporters representing daily papers in Madison and Milwaukee, sitting at the very feet of Dr. McElroy would have let escape any such sensational utterances? It is unbelievable. Had Dr. McElroy called the people before him "damned traitors" or "damned Prussians" these reporters instantly would have played that fact up into the "lead" of their reports; yet, not one of them did so. These reporters

were not deaf. They would have heard any such remarks had they been made by Dr. McElroy and they would have given them the importance that the sensational character of the utterances justified. Dr. McElroy, I am bound to believe, either has not been correctly quoted or he is guilty of inexcusable misrepresentation—misrepresentation that discredits him as a gentleman, that discredits the university which harbors him as a member of its faculty.

I write today, Dr. Van Hise, merely to commend your condemnation of Dr. McElroy, your defense of the students and of the loyalty of our people.

I have the honor to be,

Sincerely,

O. D. BRANDENBURG.

LETTER OF F. H. ELWELL, PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

MADISON, May 7, 1918.

President Chas. R. Van Hise,
University Hall.

DEAR PRESIDENT VAN HISE: During the Liberty Day program at the Stock Pavilion April 6, 1918, I was seated on the platform in the third row directly back of Senator Lenroot.

The only statement which I heard Professor McElroy make to the audience was in effect as follows: "It is the first time I have been applauded by the Americans and hissed by the enemies in the same audience." This statement was made in such an extremely low tone that the audience could not have heard the remark. In fact,

I asked Professor Commons who was seated next to me, if he understood what Professor McElroy had said, and he replied "No."

When Professor McElroy finally concluded his remarks and returned to his seat he turned to Miss Burke and said in a low voice, but so clearly that I heard it distinctly, "I believe there are a lot of damn traitors in that audience."

These statements are the only ones which I heard, and I believe I gave careful attention to the speech.

Yours very truly,

F. H. ELWELL.

LETTER OF JOHN R. COMMONS, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN.

MADISON, May 9, 1918.

President Charles R. Van Hise,
University of Wisconsin.

DEAR PRESIDENT VAN HISE: Replying to your inquiry regarding my recollection of the incidents connected with Mr. McElroy's address at the Stock Pavilion, April sixth, would say that I sat next to Professor Elwell, in the third row directly back of the speaker, Mr. McElroy. Parts of his speech I heard quite plainly, especially the first part. Other parts I was not able to comprehend. Finally, when he started to criticize the audience, I noticed something unusual, but could not gather the words which he said. Professor Elwell, who apparently heard what he said, turned to me and asked me if I heard it and I shook my head or said I did not.

At the close of the meeting and after the other speakers had finished, Professor Elwell said in effect, "Cer-

tainly President Van Hise ought to correct McElroy's impression or he will go away with the wrong notion of what the boys intended." And I said in effect, "Well, I don't know what he said, but if you feel so, certainly go ahead and catch Van Hise before he gets away, for evidently he does not think anything has occurred."

Sincerely yours,

JOHN R. COMMONS.

LETTER OF JOHN S. DONALD, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE, OF THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

MOUNT HOREB, WIS., May 8, 1918.

President Charles R. Van Hise,
University of Wisconsin,
Madison, Wisconsin.

MY DEAR PRESIDENT VAN HISE: I noted in the press your letter to President Hibben of Princeton University protesting the charges made by Professor McElroy of that institution against the students of the University of Wisconsin. The bitterness which has resulted from the visit of Professor McElroy to Wisconsin is to be regretted, and not only as Chairman of the Dane County Council of Defense, but as a citizen of the state, I wish to say that I approve decidedly of your letter to President Hibben and especially that part which invites him to investigate what occurred at the meeting over which there has been so much controversy and to ascertain for himself the true attitude of the citizens of Madison, as well as the student body.

In saying this, may I also make a statement in regard to my impression of Professor McElroy's attitude and that of his audience?

I occupied a position on the platform in front and directly to the right of the speaker on the side seats facing him. The speaker followed his notes closely and must have realized that he was not holding his audience for at one point he made the inquiry as to whether or not he could be heard at the rear of the pavilion and asked that hands be raised if his voice was reaching them. This was said in a cold, almost defiant manner. Some hands were raised.

In regard to that part of his speech concerning which the controversy has chiefly arisen, I understood him to say during his discussion of Pro-Germans and their attitude on the war and referring to the Berger vote in this state that he had hoped to face a Pro-German audience and "by God, I believe there are some of them here." It was difficult to follow him even in my favorable position on the platform and in the manner in which this was said, it is easy to understand how such a remark would not easily be interpreted by anyone in the audience in the light in which Professor McElroy has since seemed to wish to have it understood.

Permit me to further say in regard to my observations as to the behavior of the audience, I did not notice any demonstration or unkind attitude of the students or of anyone else excepting the departure of persons, which, considering the discomfort and length of the program, was not to be unexpected. I was much surprised, therefore, at the rebuke which was given to the boys in khaki by the Chairman of the meeting. His remarks at the time and the frankness in which they were expressed should have been sufficient satisfaction to any person participating in a patriotic program and especially to a supposedly honored guest with temperament and quali-

ties of mind adapted for teaching or for promoting loyalty and democracy.

Sincerely yours,
J. S. DONALD.

EXHIBIT E

(*Chicago Tribune*, May 13, 1918.)

SECURITY LEAGUE CHIEF UPHOLDS U. OF W. LOYALTY

S. A. Menken Absolves Students in McElroy Affair

The University of Wisconsin is officially cleared by the National Security league of any suspicion of disloyalty or lack of patriotic ardor. In addition, the league officially praises its unusually effective patriotic effort during the war and bears testimony to the excellent work done by its students, faculty, and alumni alike. This certificate of patriotic character was given yesterday to The Tribune by S. Stanwood Menken of New York, president of the league, after Mr. Menken had taken a hurried journey from New York to Madison, Wis., for the sole purpose of investigating at first hand the recent McElroy incident.

Mr. Menken further said yesterday that a statement would undoubtedly be forthcoming in a day or two from Prof. McElroy himself denying the correctness of some of the statements attributed to him concerning the university and its students, the latter of whom he is reported to have denounced as "damned Prussians" and disloyal during a speech made in the stock pavilion of the university on April 6.

ALLEGES MISUNDERSTANDING

Prof. McElroy's ire was particularly aroused, according to Mr. Menken, when the audience showed restlessness during the reading of the war message of the president. Thereupon he said, "Any man who does not in all things subscribe fully to these sentiments expressed by President Wilson is a traitor, not only to his country, but to all humanity." This, said Mr. Menken, the audience took to mean a generalization while Prof. McElroy, laboring under a great strain because of an arduous speaking campaign, and annoyed at the restlessness in the hall, intended it as a personal gibe at his hearers.

Because there was no resentment expressed, Prof. McElroy leaped at the conclusion that the university students had not sufficient courage to resent an imputation upon their loyalty, and so expressed himself in the east.

When the exact facts are explained, upon Mr. Menken's arrrival in New York, he said he thought Prof. McElroy would issue a statement admitting his misconception of the attitude of the university students and regretting the episode in its entirety.

MENKEN'S OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Mr. Menken's official statement on behalf of the league follows:

"I went to Wisconsin because the executive committee of the National Security league wished me to carry Prof. McElroy's statement that he never gave forth any utterance reflecting directly or indirectly on either the loyalty of Wisconsin or the university. No one could have done so. Wisconsin has, of course, had the burden of La Follette and Berger to bear, but these factors have

merely served to rouse the people; to make them fighting patriots to a degree unknown in most of the east.

"The records of the state and the university are remarkable. President Van Hise assured me that 1,500 students and 3,000 alumni had gone into the army and he detailed the wonderful work being done on constructive lines for the permanent upbuilding of the nation. We spoke of the German-Americans. I found that, as in the east, the vast majority of Germans are as loyal as any other element, and as bitter toward the few Prussian malcontents as any native born citizen."

Perils of Autocracy

"The intelligent German knows the perils of autocracy and the sorrow for mankind if we should fail to attain victory. He is a strong believer in individual liberty and in many instances he or his parents fled from Germany because they were determined to risk life under new conditions rather than suffer from 'kultur.'

"As to the McElroy incident, during his speech it is clear the students were cold and not interested in an address which, though of great academic merit, did not appeal to them. They showed their restlessness at an inopportune moment, when McElroy was reading from the president's message. He misinterpreted their action as that of disloyalty. It was most unfortunate, and when he is convinced of that fact I am sure he will be glad to say so.

"Prof. McElroy is intense in his work, which is one of the broadest and most far reaching ever undertaken in this country. He believes in it so thoroughly that it was hard for him to realize that freshmen and sophomores, rain soaked, could be showing fatigue and not irreverence for the words he quoted.

Cheers for Wisconsin

"The league at its annual meeting last Wednesday indicated in the cheers for Wisconsin, in which Prof. McElroy led, just where we stand. We in the past have had full acquaintance with the patriotic war work done by the University of Wisconsin and with the other undertakings of the university for the last twenty years to lay the foundation for true extension work among the citizens. It has taught and served so progressively that any reflection upon it would be an outrage.

"There is no difference in the quality of true patriotism east, west, north, or south, and it is important that all such suggestion be eliminated. It is destructive of the splendid national unity which is one of the great benefits that have been won through the war."

Mr. Menken left yesterday at noon for New York, and upon his arrival there the foregoing statement, together with the expected statement from Prof. McElroy, will be officially given out. With this it is expected the incident will be closed.

Exhibit F

Telegrams which were sent to President Menken after his visit at Madison

WESTERN UNION
TELEGRAM

May 24, 1918.

S. Stanwood Menken,
52 Williams St.,
New York.

Have letter from Pepper indicating that no further action will be taken in the McElroy matter. Is this correct?

Charles R. Van Hise.

WESTERN UNION
TELEGRAM

May 28, 1918.

S. Stanwood Menken,
52 Williams St.,
New York.

When may we expect a statement in regard to the attitude of the National Security League toward the McElroy affair? We had anticipated receiving the information before this time.

CHARLES R. VAN HISE.

EXHIBIT G

RESOLUTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL SECURITY LEAGUE

Dated May 17. Received May 31.

See above, p. 8.

EXHIBIT H

WESTERN UNION
TELEGRAM

May 31, 1918.

S .Stanwood Menkin,
52 Williams St.,
New York.

When you were here I stated that we had no complaint to make against the National Security League; that our charges were against Professor McElroy. Since the Executive Committee of the League endorses McElroy's statements and acts and your report as President makes a charge against this University, I withdraw the statement that we have no complaint to make against the National Security League. . . . .

CHARLES R. VAN HISE.

MSH 21315

END OF
TITLE